

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. in the college gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to electronics engineering student Christy Grabowski; Paul Kinser, provost, west campus, Valencia Community College; Bob Koch, vice president for operations, Lucent Technologies; and Tom Christian, president, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2000.

Statement on the 1997 North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit

September 6, 1996

Today, at my request, Secretary of State Christopher called for a NATO summit next year to take the next steps on adapting and enlarging the NATO Alliance and preparing it for the 21st century.

At the last NATO summit in Brussels in January 1994, my fellow NATO heads of government and I set out an ambitious agenda to adapt NATO to the opportunities and challenges of the new century. We agreed that NATO would take on new roles and missions in pursuit of peace. We agreed to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance to promote greater European responsibility and burdensharing. And we agreed to reach out to Europe's new and emerging democracies through creation of the Partnership For Peace and by moving, steadily and deliberately, to add new members to the Alliance. We were determined to end the cold war division of Europe and create, for the first time in history, a Europe united in peace, democracy, and free market prosperity.

The results are impressive: NATO already has taken on new roles and missions. The Alliance's successful IFOR operation in Bosnia, undertaken with broad participation by non-NATO members, has brought peace to that beleaguered country. NATO is reshaping its military side to make it better able to take on new missions while strengthening the European defense role within the Alliance. We are continuing to deepen and enhance the Partnership For Peace, which has created unprecedented links between NATO and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. And we are intensifying our efforts to build a strong partnership between NATO and Russia.

NATO has also been making great strides in its preparations for enlargement, holding intensive consultations on the requirements and responsibilities of membership with many of Europe's emerging new democracies.

I believe that NATO heads of government should meet in the spring or early summer of next year to take the next decisive steps. This summit would invite the first group of aspiring NATO members to begin accession talks to bring them into the Alliance. It would announce a major enhancement of the Partnership For Peace. It would also finalize work in adapting the NATO military structure to provide a more distinctive European role with full Allied participation. Finally, the summit would, we hope, confirm establishment of a broad and deep NATO-Russia partnership for the long term.

I call on my fellow NATO heads of government to join with me in this endeavor. Together, we can make this summit the most historic and forward-looking in the history of our NATO Alliance, furthering our vision of an undivided Europe, and building a bridge of peace and security, democracy and prosperity to the 21st century.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 31

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton, continuing a weekend campaign bus tour, traveled from Paducah, KY, to Troy and Dyersburg, TN. In the afternoon, they traveled to Covington, TN.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Memphis, TN, ending a weekend campaign bus tour. Later, they traveled to Little Rock, AR.